

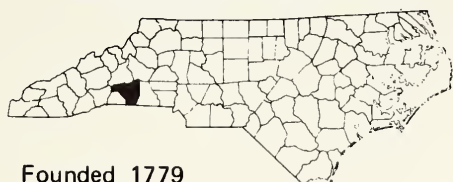
VEEP state award for voluntary work; and through Mrs. Roscoe Butler's leadership, North Carolina won the national international relations award.

Since the beginning of the home demonstration organization in Rowan County, there have been 21 home economics agents. The late

television personality, Betty Feezor, was once an agent in Rowan County. The present agents are Mrs. Louise P. Slade and Miss Amelia J. Watts.

As of June 30, 1980, Rowan has 795 members in 35 clubs, located in all areas of the county.

Rutherford



The years between 1890-1920 were truly the horse and buggy years. Farms in Rutherford County were large but towns were small. There were few industrial workers and most families made their living by farming. During this era Rutherford County had no paved roads, few telephones and no electricity. A very few well-to-do farms had running water in their homes, using gravity as the method of bringing it into the house. Transportation was "horse and buggy," mule team or oxen; grain was harvested by cradle; farm families produced their own food supply and spun wool, flax and cotton into yarn for weaving cloth and making garments.

At last the time came for an awakening which was to bring many changes to the farm, home and community. In spite of poor transportation, by 1910 well-attended farm institutes were conducted by professors from A&M College in Raleigh who spoke to farmers on soil building, cultural methods, and the importance of good soil.

Miss Steel First Agent

Then in 1912 the first farm agent, J. N. Jones, was appointed in Rutherford County, but it was not until 1918 that the first home agent, Miss Jessie Steel, was appointed. She served from February until May. She was followed by Miss Mary O'Keefe who served from June through December 1918.

Prior to this time foresighted women of the Watkins community had already written to Raleigh asking for help in getting a canning

club organized. Mrs. C. N. Justice organized a canning club on her own in 1916 and later in 1917 a community club and a woman's auxiliary evolved. Perhaps the most unusual accomplishment up to this time was the county's first community fair which was held in the Watkins community. The fair was given national recognition through the *Country Gentleman*, a popular farm magazine.

The county fair which was to follow had as its chairman J. P. D. Withrow. Tragically, the fair could not be held because of the flu epidemic of 1918.

World War I Years

From the outset of the war with Germany, the organizations flourished, teaching food conservation wherever and whenever possible. Direct quotes from meetings during 1918 give us insight into the impact of the clubs:

"Friday was taken up with preparation for the afternoon's meeting at Mount Pleasant, which is an exceedingly live community. Both men and women were urged to join. The girl's canning club has 27 members, all of whom gave good reports on the tomato crop."

"A trip was made to Gilkey to ascertain whether a demonstration club was desired. The meeting had not been advertised since the card announcing it had been in the man-of-the house's pocket for several days; hence a small attendance with provision made for a future meeting."

"The first canning school in this county was held at a cool pleasant spot near Mt. Pleasant Spring. The new El-Flo canner was installed without a problem and the women and girls worked hard. Selma Price, later Mrs. Clark Harrill, of this club had the best canning record in the county for the year showing 338 cans valued at \$32.75."

(Other canning clubs followed soon in Watkins, Union Mills, Mt. Vernon, Concord,